

Way to Be

Spotlight on our members



Adam Cowie, KI7RED

Just after the 76ers Net on Wednesday, September 12, around 7:50 pm, several of us heard a call for assistance on the 146.760 MHz repeater, so naturally a few jumped on to see how we could help. One ham, Brent Christensen, K9BCZ, provided relay help between us as well. Here's Adam's account:

I enjoy hiking and have trekked about 100 miles this year on various trails.

It's rare that I'll have cell phone coverage in the areas I'm hiking, and I've found it reassuring to have my ham radio with me whenever on the trail. I'm currently using a 5 watt Yaesu FT-60 with a 3-foot pigtail cable and Signal Stick antenna attached to the rear of my backpack. I carry an extra antenna in a PVC pipe container and an extra back-up battery on all my hikes.

On Wednesday, September 12, I got home from work and decided to hike up the Bennie Creek cutoff trail in Payson Canyon before it got dark. Unbeknownst to me, the 12 and 13 year-old Young Men from my own LDS ward were riding bikes down the same trail for their weekly activity. I had hiked about 1.7 miles up the trail and came upon the group just seconds after one of the two leaders, Mike, had crashed his bike and broken both bones in his forearm. One of the other leaders and I administered first-aid as best we could, and used my sweatshirt as a sling for Mike's arm. We had no cell coverage at this location, and I knew from past experience in the area that we wouldn't, until we reached the mouth of Payson Canyon. I anticipated it would be about two hours of hiking and driving before we got into cell range.

It was quickly getting dark, so the second youth leader and the boys started to head down the trail on their bikes. I had a head lamp with me and stayed with Mike to help him hike the 1.7 miles back to my vehicle. Mike said he wanted to contact his wife and daughter, to let them know what had happened and to meet us at the ER of Mountain View Hospital in Payson. I had previously been listening to the 76ers Net on my HT while I hiked up the trail so I figured someone would still be monitoring on that frequency. I announced that I had a minor emergency, and within seconds a ham responded, followed by a second operator, Brent K9BCX, who responded that he was in Payson Canyon at that very moment. I asked Brent to relay Mike's phone number to the first ham, then to eventually reach his family with the information about the accident.



Way to Be *continued*



I could hear others clearly on my HT but had trouble getting into the 76 repeater, and knew I was transmitting with a sketchy signal. I thought the West Mountain repeater reached this area better than the 76, but having already made contact and having a weak signal, I didn't want to lose anybody who was already on that frequency helping us out. Brent relayed the phone number to others in the valley who were able to call Mike's family. He then met us at the bottom of the trail to make sure we got out safely. Mike and I had hiked about an hour in the dark before reaching the road.

I had radio contact all the way down the canyon and knew others were monitoring us. Mike and I heard one of the operators state that he had made contact with Mike's family and relayed the information. It was very reassuring for Mike to know that his family was informed - and I believe the chatter on the radio also helped keep his mind on something other than his broken arm. Having no communication with the other youth leader and the boys with him, it was also reassuring for me to know that people were aware of our location and monitoring our progress down the canyon.



The experience made me so very grateful for ham radio and the skilled operators who helped us relay a message to Mike's family. I was at the right place at the right time and was equipped with a radio to help out. I'm thankful for the other local operators who assisted in this situation, whom I believe were Brent, Mike, Phil, Brad, and Noji.

Mike, the youth leader who was injured, had surgery the next day with 14 screws and 2 plates installed to fix the broken bones. Ouch! It was a bad break, but he's on the mend. Be safe out there!

— 73, Adam Cowie, KI7RED

Adam is a relatively new ham, having an intense interest in emergency communication, in part because of his job as the Lindon City Manager. He's been involved in UVARC and the Lindon City Drill, and has bailed us out by helping relocate club activities twice now.

Way to be, Adam!